

investigation into his tragic murder in Moscow on February 27, 2015.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 653. A bill to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize grants for and require applied water supply research regarding the water resources research and technology institutes established under that Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Water Resources Research Amendments Act. First authorized in 1964, the Water Resources Research Act established 54 Water Resources Research Institutes at top land grant universities in each of the 50 States and the U.S. territories. These institutes created a grant program and provided opportunities for applied water supply research. The bill I introduce today would reauthorize the grant program for the next 5 years and would add a program focused on research and development of green infrastructure.

Water and the availability thereof is a defining characteristic of U.S. landscape, culture, wealth, and security. Clean water is a relatively rare and invaluable resource. Last year's funded projects included research into the impacts of climate change on water supply lakes, the development of better detection methods for pathogens in drinking water, and the impacts of drought on farm supply chains. In my own State, some of the tools we use for restoration of the Chesapeake Bay were products of these same grants in previous years. WRRRA Researchers across the Mid-Atlantic States have developed ways to keep the Chesapeake waters cleaner through urban stormwater treatment, improved roadway design, and eco-friendly poultry farming practices. WRRRA-funded projects develop innovative and cost-effective solutions for similar water resources issues across the country. Undoubtedly, funding WRRRA is an intelligent and necessary investment in the future of our water resources.

WRRRA authorizes two types of annual grants. First, it supplies grants to each Water Resources Research Institute for research that fosters improvements in water supply reliability, explores new ways to address water problems, encourages dissemination of research to water managers and the public, and encourages the entry of new scientists, engineers and technicians into the water resources field. Second, WRRRA authorizes a national competitive grant program to address regional water issues. All WRRRA grants leverage non-federal dollars at a minimum ratio of 2 to 1, but often far beyond that level, as high as 5 to 1.

The Water Resources Research Act was most recently reauthorized in 2006, in PL 109-471. In that period, the pro-

gram was authorized at \$12,000,000 per year, providing \$6,000,000 each to state and competitive project grants. Authorization for these grants expired in fiscal year 2011. Today's bill would reauthorize both grant programs for an additional 5 years by providing \$7,500,000 for institutional grants and \$1,500,000 for national competitive grants. This lower authorization level reflects our efforts to adjust for present fiscal limitations. The proposed authorization maximizes the economic efficiency of the program without compromising its efficacy. An independent review panel has judged that the Water Resources Research Institutes command significant funding leverage for the modest amount of appropriations required to support it. Thus, we can be sure that we are supporting top-notch science while maximizing cost-effectiveness. Moreover, by funding this network of institutes we are investing in our future. The Water Resources Research Institutes are the country's single largest training program for water scientists, technicians, and engineers.

Today, floods, droughts, and water degradation issues pervade the nation. Simultaneously, water resources are increasingly critical for production of resources, economic stability, and the health and well-being of the citizenry. WRRRA grants provide us with improved understanding of water-related issues and better technology to address them. Nearly half a century after the Water Resources Research grant program was first put in place, this program is relevant, critical, and deserving of our support.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 653

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Water Resources Research Amendments Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT AMENDMENTS.

(a) CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.—Section 102 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10301) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (7) through (9) as paragraphs (8) through (10), respectively;

(2) in paragraph (8) (as so redesignated), by striking "and" at the end; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following:

"(7) additional research is required into increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of new and existing treatment works through alternative approaches, including—

"(A) nonstructural alternatives;

"(B) decentralized approaches;

"(C) energy use efficiency;

"(D) water use efficiency; and

"(E) actions to extract energy from wastewater;"

(b) CLARIFICATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.—Section 104(b)(1) of the Water Re-

sources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking "water-related phenomena" and inserting "water resources"; and

(2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and".

(c) COMPLIANCE REPORT.—Section 104(c) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking "(c) From the" and inserting the following:

"(c) GRANTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—From the"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) REPORT.—Not later than December 31 of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee on the Budget of the Senate, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives a report regarding the compliance of each funding recipient with this subsection for the immediately preceding fiscal year."

(d) EVALUATION OF WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303) is amended by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

"(e) EVALUATION OF WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH PROGRAM.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a careful and detailed evaluation of each institute at least once every 3 years to determine—

"(A) the quality and relevance of the water resources research of the institute;

"(B) the effectiveness of the institute at producing measured results and applied water supply research; and

"(C) whether the effectiveness of the institute as an institution for planning, conducting, and arranging for research warrants continued support under this section.

"(2) PROHIBITION ON FURTHER SUPPORT.—If, as a result of an evaluation under paragraph (1), the Secretary determines that an institute does not qualify for further support under this section, no further grants to the institute may be provided until the qualifications of the institute are reestablished to the satisfaction of the Secretary."

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 104(f)(1) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(f)(1)) is amended by striking "\$12,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011" and inserting "\$7,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020".

(f) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS WHERE RESEARCH FOCUSED ON WATER PROBLEMS OF INTERSTATE NATURE.—Section 104(g)(1) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10303(g)(1)) is amended in the first sentence by striking "\$6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011" and inserting "\$1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020".

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 657. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend to all veterans with a serious service-connected injury eligibility to participate in the family caregiver services program; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am proud to introduce a bill today along with Senator BALDWIN that will help veterans and the men and women who care for them. Called the Caregivers

Expansion and Improvement Act, it would open the VA Family Caregivers Program to all eligible veterans who were severely injured while serving our country.

I introduced legislation creating the Family Caregiver Program in 2009 so caregivers of severely injured veterans could take care of our heroes at home. The program provides home health training, peer support, and a small financial stipend to caregivers of severely injured veterans. The caregivers also have access to mental health support and enrollment in the VA's Civilian Health and Mental Program, if they are not already eligible.

When the Caregivers Program was created, we had to limit eligibility for the program to post-9/11 veterans. It has been wildly successful. Twenty thousand veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan participate in the program today. This is more than five times the number the VA originally estimated would sign up. The program helps caregivers, who shoulder the cost of home care, know they are not alone.

Since introducing the Caregivers Program 6 years ago, I have gotten to know many caregivers in my State. One family who lives in Chicago, Dan and Trish Sylvester, made a lasting impression on me. Trish, a veteran of the Iraq war, is 100 percent disabled due to severe PTSD. It can be triggered by anything from a backfiring car to simply a bad thought running through her head. Dan, who is a veteran himself, graduated from DePaul Law School last year and now practices law part time.

Today, as he did all through law school, Dan takes care of Trish, making sure she stays on top of all her medications and going with her to counseling appointments. Trish's symptoms first took hold in February 2011, and she was hospitalized multiple times.

The Sylvesters' found out about the Family Caregiver Program shortly after it was launched and applied with the help of a Jesse Brown VA employee named Erica. They use the Caregivers stipend to pay for counseling services that are not provided by the VA. The money also helped them avoid having to take out more in student loans than they had to and kept Dan from having to add a part-time job to his already full plate when he was a student. Dan says the resources available to him through the program are lifesavers.

Both Trish and Dan showed courage in serving our country. Their sacrifice didn't end after their deployments. They continue to show great courage every day that they work together on Trish's recovery.

The bill Senator BALDWIN and I are introducing today would allow eligible veterans from all wars to apply for the VA Family Caregivers Program. The VA has estimated that as many as 88,000 additional veteran caregivers could qualify for the program under this bill.

Not only does the program allow veterans to stay in their homes with their families, it is a money-saver for taxpayers. The VA spends an average of \$332,000 per veteran per year in VA nursing homes. It spends an average of \$88,000 per veteran per year in community nursing homes. It also spends about \$45,000 a year in per diem payments to veterans in State Veterans Homes. Through the Caregivers Program, the VA cost per veteran per year is about \$36,000. This includes the stipend, which averages between \$600 and \$2,250 a month, based on the level of care and the geographic location, and services provided to the caregiver. It is an enormous savings to the VA, when you consider the cost of the alternative, full-time, institutional care. And it's a tremendous comfort to the veterans and the caregivers who look after them.

I commend each of the caregivers who have made the decision to care for our heroes. These veterans sacrificed their health and well-being for their country, and their caregivers have sacrificed much of their own lives, careers, school, retirement, to care for them upon their return home. We owe each and every one of them a great debt of gratitude. We want to make sure all qualified family caregivers are enrolled in this program.

With this bill, we are on the way to helping many families in need. We can finally provide assistance to the caregivers of Veterans of all eras on an equal basis.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 657

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Caregivers Expansion and Improvement Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION TO ALL VETERANS WITH A SERIOUS SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY OF ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.

Section 1720G(a)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "on or after September 11, 2001".

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself,
Mr. REED, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REID, Mr. SCHUMER,
Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW,
Mr. WYDEN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 660. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a credit for married couples who are both employed and have young children; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to join my colleagues in taking a step back from the partisan bills on the floor this week to talk about the ways we should be able to work together to grow the

economy and help our working families.

Democrats have an economic theory that we are pretty confident about. We believe that real, long-term economic growth is built from the middle out, not from the top down. We believe that government does have a role to play in investing in our working families and making sure they have the opportunity to work hard and succeed, offering a hand up to those who want to climb the economic ladder and provide a better life for themselves and their families. We believe our government and our economy should be working for all families, not just the wealthiest few.

Thankfully we have had the opportunity to put some policies in place over the past few years that have pulled our economy back from the brink and have started moving it in the right direction. We are not there yet, but across the country businesses have added almost 12 million new jobs. We have had over 59 straight months of job growth, including almost 1 million manufacturing jobs. The unemployment rate is now under 6 percent. Health care costs are growing at their lowest rate in almost 50 years, while millions more families now have access to affordable coverage. The Federal budget deficit has been reduced by over two-thirds since President Obama took office.

Although many Republicans seem to keep threatening to bring us back, we have been able to move away from the constant tea party-driven crises and uncertainty that were really destroying jobs and holding back our economy.

We are headed in a good direction. I am proud of the policies that we fought for that helped us to get here, but we do have a whole lot more to do.

The economy has changed over the past few decades, and our Tax Code has not kept up. Working families have seen their incomes stagnate while the cost of living, health care, and education has continued to go up. More and more families have two workers in the workforce, which is a good thing for so many women but brings additional expenses, such as childcare and transportation and the increased marginal tax rate paid by the second worker in the family. That is why I am very proud to introduce two middle-class tax cut bills today that will put money in the pockets of working families and update our Tax Code for the 21st-century economy.

My 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act would create a new 10-percent credit on up to \$10,000 of the income of the second earner in a family. In other words, qualifying working families can reduce their income taxes by up to \$1,000, which can go a long way toward offsetting some of the additional costs these families bear as they go back to work. That tax cut rewards families for more work, and it would especially help women who want to rejoin the workforce today.

The second bill I am introducing today is the Helping Working Families

Afford Child Care Act. This bill will update and reform the outdated child independent tax credit to help more working families. It would increase the tax credit to keep up with the rising costs of quality childcare and would make sure that the credit actually keeps up with the times by indexing it to inflation.

I am very proud to introduce these two bills today, but I am even more proud that my bills are just two of the bills Democrats are introducing today that will help working families by putting more money in their pockets and helping them access more opportunity. My colleagues are going to be talking about the bills they wrote, but our package of bills also includes, besides what I just talked about, an earned-income and childcare tax credit expansion and expansion of the American opportunity tax credit to help middle-class families afford childcare so they can get back on the job and help them pay for college so they can work hard and invest in themselves and their careers.

We know Republicans like to talk about cutting taxes. Well, with these bills we are giving everyone a chance to do exactly that—and not with more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations. Republicans have given that trickle-down theory a try, and it failed. Our approach is tax cuts for the middle class, for the workers who need it the most, to help them afford the costs they are faced with, such as childcare, putting food on the table, getting back on the job, and to give them the opportunity to work hard and succeed.

We want to grow the economy from the middle out, not the top down, and we think these middle-class tax cut bills are a very strong step in the right direction. We hope Republicans will join us to get these done.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COONS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. 665. A bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015.

Every day, more than 900,000 Federal, State and local law enforcement offi-

cers put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. Unfortunately these officers can become targets for criminals and those seeking to evade our justice system, and we must make sure our officers have all the tools they need to protect themselves and each other.

Each year thousands of law enforcement officers are assaulted while performing their duties and many suffer serious injuries or even lose their lives. In December 2014, New York City Police Department officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were assassinated while sitting in their marked police patrol car in Brooklyn. This legislation is named after those officers in honor of the ultimate sacrifice that they made to serve and protect their fellow citizens.

According to preliminary data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, law enforcement fatalities in the U.S. rose 24 percent in 2014, reversing what had been two years of dramatic declines in line of duty deaths. The report indicates that 126 federal, state, local, tribal and territorial officers were killed in the line of duty this year, compared to 102 in 2013. Ambush-style attacks such as those that took the lives of officers Ramos and Liu were the number one cause of felonious officer deaths for the fifth year in a row. Fifteen officers nationwide were killed in ambush assaults in 2014, matching 2012 for the highest total since 1995.

I thank my original cosponsors who have joined me in introducing this legislation, including my lead co-sponsor Senator GRAHAM.

The rapid dissemination of critical, time-sensitive information about suspected criminals is essential to keeping our communities safe. This legislation would encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert programs through the United States. The Attorney General would establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice. The Blue Alert system could be used when a law enforcement officer is: seriously injured or killed in the line of duty; missing in connection with the officer's official duties; or an imminent or credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received.

The Blue Alert system could be used when the suspect has not been apprehended, and where there is sufficient descriptive information of the suspect and any vehicles involved, if applicable. This information can be used by local law enforcement, the public and the media to help facilitate capture of such offenders and ultimately reduce the risk they pose to our communities and law enforcement officers.

Currently there is no national alert system that provides immediate information to other law enforcement agencies, the media or the public at large. Many states have created a state Blue Alert system in an effort to better in-

form their local communities. The State of Maryland, under the leadership of former Governor Martin O'Malley, created their Blue Alert system in 2008 after the murder of Maryland State Trooper Wesley Brown. Blue Alert programs have been created in 20 states to date, with a growing number of states considering establishing Blue Alert programs.

The purpose of our National Blue Alert legislation is to keep our law enforcement officers and our communities safe. And based on the success of the AMBER Alert and the SILVER Alert, I believe this BLUE Alert will be equally successful in helping to apprehend criminal suspects who have seriously injured or killed our law enforcement officers.

I am also pleased to say this legislation has the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department, and many other law enforcement associations. Passing this legislation can help us live up to our commitment to help better protect those who serve us. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 96—CONDEMNING THE MURDER OF BORIS NEMTSOV, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 96

Whereas, on February 27, 2015, Russian opposition leader and former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov was brutally murdered in the shadow of the Kremlin in Russia's capitol city Moscow;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov was a man of conviction and principle who dedicated his life to the fight against corruption in Russia and sought to advance democracy, human rights, free speech, free market reforms, and the rule of law throughout his life;

Whereas, in December 2011, Mr. Nemtsov helped mobilize the largest anti-Kremlin demonstrations since the early 1990's, leading tens of thousands of Russians to march in protest of widespread fraud and corruption in the parliamentary elections;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation responded by passing a series of harsh laws that vastly expanded the definition of treason, increased government control over the media, and limited the scope and activities of opposition parties and civil society organizations;

Whereas Russian authorities exploit these laws for their own political ends and use them to intimidate members of the opposition, human rights activists, and others with whom they disagree;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov strongly opposed these and other repressive measures, and expressed concerns that President Vladimir Putin's policies were threatening democracy and rule of law in Russia;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov strongly criticized Russia's annexation of Crimea and military